



Top tips on staying up to date in primary care

By Lorna Burns¹ and Ewen McColl²

Abstract

It is important that dental professionals stay up to date with developments in dentistry such as new guidelines, latest research and technology. However, the myriad of information sources, compounded by a lack of time, can make staying up to date a difficult task. An effective strategy to help you stay well informed and avoid information overload is to streamline electronic communications. Automated systems can be set up to assemble updates from numerous sources into a single digital location, which can be checked at a time convenient to you. This Top Tips article presents some recommendations for streamlining information notifications, which after the initial set up, will save time and effort.

Email updates

Many information sources can be set up to deliver updates by email. It is best to be selective at first, choosing sources relevant to UK practice, before adding to their number. Below are some suggestions for useful and relevant email updates that you could subscribe to.

1. The *British Dental Journal* and sister publications *BDJ in Practice*, *BDJ Open*, *BDJ Team* and *Evidence-Based Dentistry* are all published by Springer Nature on behalf of the British Dental Association (BDA) (Fig. 1). Creating an account with the publisher allows you to sign up for email alerts for each of these publications (note these are listed under Medicine). Follow the links to sign up for alerts from the BDJ homepage at: <https://www.nature.com/bdj/>. These alerts will provide readers with news, current affairs, educational and practice updates as well as peer reviewed research evidence (some content is subject to BDA membership or subscription)
2. *Dental Update* and *The Dentist* offer free email alerts, providing news, discussion articles and knowledge and education updates. Much of the content is free or open access. Sign up to alerts from their websites at:
 - *The Dentist* <https://www.the-dentist.co.uk/>
 - *Dental Update* <https://www.dental-update.co.uk/>

The British Dental Association <https://bda.org/> as well as the College of General Dentistry <https://cgdent.uk/> both offer email newsletters, even to non-members (note the link to the College of General Dentistry newsletter sign-up is <https://cgdent.uk/college-newsletter/>). These provide latest news about practice, regulation, compliance and governance. The College of General Dentistry also produces a peer-reviewed journal for the whole dental team, *Primary Dental Journal* <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/PRD>. This quarterly journal focuses on a particular theme with each issue



Fig. 1 The BDJ Portfolio

(eg aesthetic dentistry, digital dentistry, oral surgery) and provides knowledge and education articles. Members of the College receive print issues and can access the full online archive of over 1,400 articles. If you're not a member, you can read and download the open access content and purchase individual issues. You can also stay up to date by following the College or the BDA on social media. The College has a new Instagram page <https://www.instagram.com/cgdentyoungdental/> specifically curated for dental students and early career professionals, which posts tips and advice, and highlights relevant open access articles from the journal.

Managing email updates

Creating numerous email alerts has the potential to overload your inbox, but there are some options for managing the volume of email traffic. First, consider if you prefer to create a designated email inbox for keeping up to date, which is separate from your primary email. This option prevents your own inbox from becoming too busy, but requires regular checking. It may be more convenient for email alerts to be filed in a folder inside your primary email account. Most email services allow this function; check the settings for filters, folders, or categories. ▶▶

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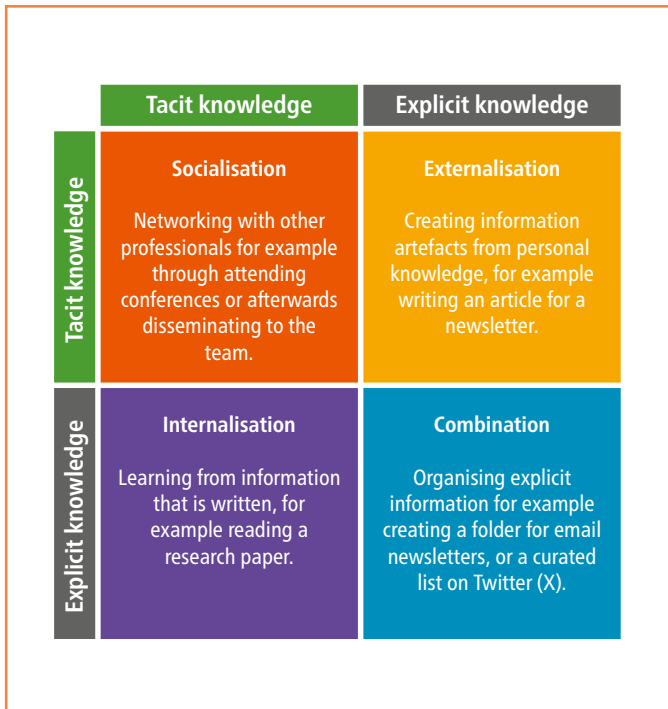


Fig. 2 Adapted from Nonaka's SECI model of knowledge creation (1994).¹ This depicts four modes of knowledge creation: Socialisation (when individuals interact); Externalisation (when knowledge is expressed in written form); Combination (when explicit information is organised); and Internalisation (when documented information is learned and understood)

« Twitter lists

Twitter (rebranded as X) continues to be widely used by many organisations and is a good source for keeping up to date. If you are an active tweeter, you might consider creating a new profile for your professional interests which will prevent your personal feed from becoming overloaded. There are many key organisations which actively push content on Twitter. These can either be followed, or you can create a 'List' within Twitter, which is a way of organising the content. Key dental publications also tweet their latest papers. These are often at e-publication stage, before the papers appear in an assigned issue. Suggested accounts and their handles are given in Table 1. You can search for their handles and then either follow them or add them to your 'List'. To search, include the @ symbol eg @TheDentalElf (without spaces).

Creating knowledge from information

The recommendations presented above are strategies for managing information by selecting and combining information streams into a single digital location. These digital items remain explicit forms of information until they have been read and internalised by you, the reader.¹ This is when explicit becomes tacit knowledge. The conversion of knowledge across explicit and tacit forms is illustrated in Figure 2. Whilst information management is concerned with retrieving, assembling and organising information, the discipline of knowledge management is concerned with the creation and exchange of knowledge between individuals and across organisations.² Knowledge management practitioners believe that

Table 1 Dental organisations' X (Twitter) handles	
	Twitter handle
Keep up to date with practice, news and events	
General Dental Council	@GDC_UK
College of General Dentistry	@CGDent
Dentistry (news website and magazine)	@Dentistry
British Dental Association	@TheBDA
British Association of Dental Therapists	@BADT1963
Keep up to date with research	
British Society for Oral and Dental Research	@BSODR_UK
International Association for Dental Research	@IADR
British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry	@bascd_uk
<i>British Dental Journal</i>	@The_BDJ
Dental Elf (research evidence blog)	@TheDentalElf
<i>JDR Clinical & Translational Research</i>	@JDRClinTransRes
<i>Community Dental Health</i>	@CDHJournal

knowledge is created when people interact, therefore opportunities for professionals to connect and mobilise knowledge is seen as a key strategy.³ The final recommendation therefore is to seek out networking opportunities with other dental professionals.

Networking

Attending conferences is not only a way of learning about new research, products and technologies. They are also places to connect with other professionals. Whilst conference keynotes and presentations disseminate information, they are often uni-directional. Many conference programmes also include workshop activities, where knowledge exchange can be dynamic, unplanned and multi-way. Some of the key dental conferences in the UK are:

- British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show. This takes place at the Birmingham NEC in May each year. The sister event takes place in the London ExCeL Centre in October. Both events are inclusive for all members of the dental team

'If you are an active tweeter, you might consider creating a new profile for professional interests'

- Specialist interest societies such as the British Society of Periodontology <https://www.bsperio.org.uk/> often host an annual conference. Other special interest conferences are held by the British Society of Prosthodontics <https://www.bsspd.org/>, British Society of Paediatric Dentistry <https://www.bspd.co.uk/>, British Society for Oral and Dental Research <https://bsodr.org.uk/> and British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy <https://www.bsdh.org.uk/>.

« Local Dental Committees are a valuable source of networking for dentists with an NHS contract. Dental professionals working in private practice can instead link up with others through regional branches of special interest societies, such as those above. There may also be opportunities to network with other dental professionals through events hosted by one of the UK's dental schools. These may include evening lectures or alumni events.

Networking does not have to be with people outside of the home practice. Knowledge can be mobilised through regular journal club and knowledge exchange activities within the practice. A journal club, for example, would encourage the whole dental team to engage with dental literature. Team members should take it in turns to select and share an article for discussion. Further sharing of knowledge can take place following attendance at a conference or lecture. When keeping yourself up-to-date, consider what might be useful for other team members, and the best mechanisms for sharing knowledge with colleagues. ■

References

1. Nonaka I. A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation. *Organization Sci* 1994; **5**: 14–37.
2. Payne J, Fryer J. Knowledge management and information management: A tale of two siblings. *Business Information Review* 2020; **37**: 69–77.
3. Day A. K is for Knowledge, M is for Mobilisation. Why bother with Knowledge Mobilisation in healthcare? Health Education England. May 2021. Available at: <https://library.hee.nhs.uk/about/blogs/k-is-for-knowledge-and-m-is-for-mobilisation.-why-bother-with-knowledge-mobilisation-in-healthcare> (accessed November 2023).

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Are you aware of dental charges in your area?



The Dental Defence Union (DDU) is reminding dental professionals to be clear when communicating dental charges and fees to patients.

This follows the introduction of the new dental fee structure in Scotland which came into effect on 1 November and a recent report¹ published by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman which found that the number of dental complaints about NHS treatment in England has risen from 1,193 in 2017/18 to 1,982 in 2022/23 – a 66% increase. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman states that there needs to be complete transparency over the costs of care.

Leo Briggs, deputy head of the DDU said: ‘In the DDU’s experience, confusion or disagreement over dental fees can lead to a complaint. To avoid problems, we advise communicating charges and your practice’s fee policy clearly to all patients at the earliest opportunity’.

The DDU’s checklist to minimise the risk of receiving a compliant due to dental charges includes:

1. Clearly set out services and charges in practice notices and on your website
2. Provide details of payment arrangements, such as whether patients are expected to pay for their treatment in advance or on completion
3. Provide a written treatment plan that includes costs and if the treatment is being provided privately or under the NHS. Ask the patient to sign this and keep a copy with their records
4. Provide an updated written cost estimate and treatment plan if changes are required as the treatment progresses.

To learn more about dental charges and exemptions visit <https://www.theddu.com/guidance-and-advice/guides/avoiding-confusion-over-dental-charges-and-exemptions>.

References

1. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Complaints to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, 2022–23. 2023. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/publications/complaints-parliamentary-and-health-service-ombudsman-2022-23> (accessed November 2023).